THE SENTINEL
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Boy Scout Tragedy Offers Lessons

Last month, during a Boy Scout National Jamboree at Fort. A.P. Hill, Virginia, four Scout Leaders were setting up a large tent when the large tent pole they were erecting hit a nearby power line. All four were electrocuted as many horrified Scouts looked on.

CAP members can be placed in a similar situation while erecting tents or antennae at mission bases or during a bivouac. The lesson we can learn from this tragedy is to **LOOK UP AND LIVE** - survey the site thoroughly before doing any kind of overhead work. If there is a power line in the vicinity, the best advice would be to relocate your activity. If this is not an option, the following measures should be followed:

- ☑ Consider all power lines energized.
- ☑ Don't assume lines are insulated, therefore you are safe. Some line coatings are only for weather protection.
- ☑ Don't work closer than 10' to a power line.
- ☑ Do overhead work during good visibility.
- ☑ Have a spotter help you stay clear.
- ☑ Don't use conductive ladders.

So, what should you do if a person like these guys touches a live wire and is being shocked? It depends. If the person is in contact with indoor, low voltage electricity, don't touch the person and attempt to switch the power off. If you can't shut the power off, use a non-conductor (dry wood, rope, board, broom handle) to separate the person from the current.

If the person has come into contact with high-voltage, outdoor wires, call 911 and then the power company immediately. Do not attempt to touch the person or to try to free the person from the wires.

As if these tragic Scouting fatalities weren't enough, over 300 Scouts and adults fell victim to various stages of heat illness the following day. Temps were in the triple digits. Fortunately, all were treated and released. I covered prevention tips for heat illness last month - so, enough said on this aspect of the Jamboree.

However, one last question haunts me. I wonder if a detailed site survey and Deliberate Operational Risk Management Assessment was conducted. In my opinion, these two actions would probably have identified these risks. But, anyone can be a "Monday Morning Quarterback."

Gray-Haired Pilots

As one myself, I feel qualified to speak on this topic. It's not news to anyone that people are now living longer than ever before. "Baby Boomers" are becoming the largest group of elders in the history of our planet. Because CAP attracts pilots and reflects a cross section of our society, we can expect our fair share of aging pilots. There's good news and bad news with older pilots. The good news is that they're usually very experienced and must be doing something right or they wouldn't still be alive! The bad news, however, is the natural tendency for everything in our universe to decay -- it's called entropy. We're all decaying as we grow older. Our reflexes slow,

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our eyes and ears don't seem to work as good as they once did. It happens so gradually that some don't even notice. Others notice, but their love of flying makes them deny any deficiency that could threaten their flight status. This presents an insidious threat to our members and our resources. So what do we do? We can't discriminate against age, but we can discriminate against deficiencies that jeopardize our organization. Introspective individuals are usually able to determine when certain missions exceed their personal limitations - others allow their pride to interfere in this decision. How do you identify them? Be observant. It becomes apparent when someone can't hear correctly or read their charts at night. Do you ground them? Don't rush to judgment - first, understand their problem. They might simply have a cold that's causing hearing problems. Maybe the individual shouldn't fly mountain searches, but could handle a simple transport mission. There are a lot of variables, but sometimes a hard call has to be made -- to not only protect our organization, but the individual as well. With command authority comes command responsibility. Don't let an accident occur that you could have prevented -- it would haunt you forever.

AOPA Studies the Aging Pilot

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) has enlisted the help of the United Flying Octogenarians (at least 80 years of age) in its Aging Pilot Study, a three-pronged effort to learn more about what kinds of accidents older pilots are having, what causes them, and what actually happens to pilots' skills as they age. The three parts of the study involve looking at the insurance claims of older pilots, probing the AOPA Air Safety Foundation's extensive accident database for the causes of accidents involving older pilots, and using an independent research organization to evaluate what happens to the cognitive and neuro-muscular skills of pilots as they age.

AOPA's Aging Pilot Study was prompted, in part, by the escalating surcharges some insurance companies are charging pilots over the age of 60. One company, for example, charges 30 percent above its base rate for a 70-year-old pilot, 95 percent for a 75-year-old, and a whopping 160 percent for an octogenarian aviator.

The study is being overseen by James D. Deimler, who was the program manager for the FAA's Age 60 Rule Study. He also has co-authored several research reports for the FAA's Civil Aerospace Medical Institute (CAMI) and is an AOPA member, pilot, and graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy.

Red Light Running

According to the Department of Transportation, approximately 43% of motor vehicle crashes occur at intersections or are intersection-related. Red light running is the leading cause of urban crashes. Automated red light running photo-enforcement systems, also known as red light cameras, can help communities enforce traffic laws and prevent dangerous traffic signal violations. Red light cameras are connected to traffic signals and to sensors buried in the pavement at the crosswalk or stop line. The cameras are triggered by vehicles passing over the sensors after the signal has turned red. Two photographs of the violation are taken, one when the vehicle enters the intersection and the other while it is in the intersection. In most localities with the systems, citations are mailed to the registered owner of the car who is able to challenge the citation if he or she was not the driver at the time of the violation. In 2003, more than 1.9 million intersection crashes occurred throughout the nation. Of those, about 231,000 are due to red light running - resulting in about 1,000 deaths and 181,000 injuries. According to a survey conducted by the U.S. Department of Transportation and the American Trauma Society, two out of three Americans see someone running a red light at least a few times a week and, at most, once a day. One in three Americans knows someone who has been injured or killed in a red light running crash.

Fire Extinguisher Memory Aid

Here's an easy way to remember which type of extinguisher to use on different types of fires. The three main types of extinguishers are A, B, and C. A=Ashes. Use the A-type extinguisher for material that typically produces ashes - wood, paper, cloth, trash, etc. B=Barrels. Use B-type extinguishers for items typically stored in barrels - gas, oil, grease, paint or other flammable liquids. C=Current. Use C-type extinguishers for powered electrical equipment.